

der that the gate into which we are called to enter, although it be a strait gate, leadeth unto life. And all that a man hath, said Job, will he give for his life. Yea, all that a man hath will he give for the short and uncertain life that now is. And shall the life everlasting be thought unworthy of an effort! What care and toil are employed to gild and to prolong the miserable span that lies between us and the grave; and shall the eternal state which stretches beyond it be left unprovided for! Shall the fleeting and unsatisfactory enjoyments of the world provoke our desire and activity; and shall the happiness of heaven be regarded with indifference and unconcern? Shall we seek honor one of another, and remain sensible to the favor of God? Shall we covet the riches of the world, and have no holy avarice for those treasures that are in heaven? In a word, shall we run through a thousand devious paths when passion and folly call, and never strive to enter in at the strait gate, to which reason and religion point? Shall no sacrifice be reckoned too great to promote our worldly views, and shall every little difficulty be magnified into an excuse for neglecting our eternal salvation? Ah, Christians! such was not the temper nor the conduct of those who are now in heaven. They had difficulties to encounter which we can never know; but they met and overcame them by the firmness of their faith. Abraham, at the command of God, went out from his native land, not knowing whither he went, but trusting in singleness of heart to the sureness of the promise. Moses left a magnificent court, to work out his salvation amidst the perils and privations of a wilderness. The early Christians forsook all that they might follow Christ. They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that in heaven they had a more enduring substance. They reckoned that the sufferings of the present life were not worthy to be compared with the happiness that followed; and in the midst of all their dangers and difficulties, supported themselves with the hope that their present light and transitory afflictions were working out for them a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory. Has that glory faded, that we can look up to it with such indifference? Do we judge of the happiness of heaven by the maxims of earth? Do we carry the measurements of a perishing world into the regions of immortality? Do we think that the crowns of the just have grown dim with years? Do we think that the heaven above us is not that bright and glorious place to which patriarchs, and prophets, and martyrs, pressed with such eager and unfaltering step, and that the earth beneath us is not that hollow and deceitful dust on which they trod with fear and trembling? Or is it that we want the eye of faith, to pierce through the mists of this world's delusions? Is it that we want the heart of faith, to carry us unseduced through the assaults of its temp-

tations? Is it, in short, that we are willing to seek but not willing to strive? Let us remember, however, that many shall seek to enter in and shall not be able. Let us remember the Scripture which saith, "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." All the images employed to denote the Christian life are images of activity and exertion. It is a journey; where the way is narrow and the dangers many. It is a warfare, where our enemies are numerous and powerful. It is a race, where we must run if we would obtain the prize. It is a city, the gate of which is strait, so that we must strive if we wish to enter in, for many will seek to enter in and shall not be able. All the examples, too, which are set forth for our imitation are examples of zeal and industry. The patriarchs and early saints accounted themselves as pilgrims and strangers upon earth, so that they might become the citizens of heaven. The apostles and primitive Christians reckoned not their lives dear unto them, that so they might win Christ and be found in Him. And yet we think that when walking at our ease we may be tending towards the same glorious destination.

Spirits of the just! How vain, then, were all your labors! Why leave behind you such needless and perilous examples? The children of this world are wiser in their generation than you who have now become the children of the light. That gate, which to your weak vision seemed difficult and strait, has opened before them with ready and capacious folds. Instead of the fiery chariots which carried you into heaven, they think to set themselves down among you by an easier conveyance. Although they walk in the way of their eyes, and follow the devices of their own imaginations, they are looking to share that inheritance which was the reward of your tears and blood; and are meditating to rise to your blissful society, not from amidst watchings and fastings and prayers—but from amidst self-indulgence and unconcern and sin.

Blessed Jesus! Why that life of self-denial and devotion—why that holiness and harmlessness and separation from sinners, if men may call themselves thy followers and enter into thy glory without them? Why that mystery of the cross, if, through it, the world be not crucified unto us and we unto the world? Why that bursting of the bands of death, if it do not quicken us to newness of life? Why that ascending glory, if it do not lift us above vanity and temptation? And what must our condemnation be, if after coming down from heaven and setting us an example that we should follow thy steps, Thou hast gone back to thy bliss, without drawing after Thee our most thankful emotions, our most earnest resolutions, and our most vigorous exertions?